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25-21

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF
INTER-AMERICAN AFFAIRS
MAY 21 1954

FROM: Guatemala City

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 723, May 20, 1 p.m.

IRCA manager Haase informed Embassy this morning that attempt had been made near Puerto Barrios to derail one of trains carrying armaments from port to Guatemala City (EMBTEL 708, May 19).

Apparently small charge explosives was set off under rail which train passing over, but rail was only cracked and train passed over safely. Another charge was found which had not gone off. Colonel in charge of guard on train had it delayed pending arrival of motor-car to act as pilot.

City full of rumors regarding types of armaments but none worthy of credit. Speculation ranges from small arms, bazookas, flame-throwers, and mountain guns to MIG-15s and atomic bombs.

Based on very narrow sample, public reaction was initially that arms would make Arbenz regime invulnerable, but Department's statement, Wiley's speech, and President Eisenhower's comment in press conference, encouraged many to believe that USA would now take decisive action against Guatemalan Government. Press to date has unanimously supported Guatemalan Government's right to purchase arms where it pleases, especially since USA had refused to sell.

PEURIFOY

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